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Henry Hastings Hall to Sarah Bracher, 20 May 1862

Mandurah

May 20th 1862

My dear Sister

I have not your last note at hand but it was dated Feby, had been navigating up and down your Murray River and arrived per last mail smothered with office stamps You had better in future not direct *Murray*. S has received a letter from brother George which I have no doubt he will account for in due time. Our prospects are slightly better. I have never seen reason to despair but you know Shake is naturally of a desponding turn & too apt to look only on the black side — of two evils I don't know which is worst, the former or the sanguine temperament but the latter must be the happiest, for even when bitter disappointments come I hope against hope, and this keeps up one's spirits & enables one to see 'the silver lining of the cloud'. Shake calls my injudicious spending of money 'imprudence', 'recklessness', and other hard names but your husband with keener penetration and more generous feeling has termed it *want of judgment* & I feel that it is right — whether it has been in bolstering up a bankrupt concern or starting a place without sufficient means — I am happy to hear you got your case — and was exceedingly pleased by a sight of dear Fanny's letter to her Papa — what a pleasure it is that she writes so nicely & expresses herself so naturally I shall if I can write her by the ensuing mail — and I suppose Aunt thinks I have forgotten her. Poor old Capt Hester died on the 5th current, and Capt Shaw on the following day. Old Flarty is dead and Mrs Woodward at the age of 72 — all in a week — the old settlers go off always at the close of summer. Ander and his wife have gone to live with Mr Lazenby for the present so S and I are keeping batchelor's hall. We were very near taking Mrs Sutton's property for which we offered her £400 a year but she is very hard to deal with and would like to have the money and the place too — she is often very drunk and a few days since while in that state had a narrow escape of being drowned her riches are a curse to her. During the past summer she lost by fire some splendid farm buildings and a quantity of corn valued at £500. I

was at the fire and feared at one time it would reach us — our house is only some 300 yards from hers A digger named Gladman has arrived from Victoria to prospect for the £5000 reward offered by this Colony for the discovery of a payable Goldfield have you received my letter relative thereto. Our new Governor Dr Hampton appears to be much liked — but new brooms sweep clean. Ask George if he thinks some of our fish nicely salted, and smoked mullet would sell on the Diggings, we can get abundance here. I should like to know how much it is a ton on Bendigo? You have still plenty of consumers in the Irish and Chinese; would fish be best dried or packed in brine? the merchants here only offer £12 per ton in the pickle for export, snappers and other large fish — and for mullet herrings &c 14/- per hundred in number. The season has been very dry, but we have lately had rain and are busy ploughing — it will take us a month. We grow wheat barley and rye. I have just received your long letter of Apl 23^d and will send you some papers if time will permit With kind love to your husband and family

I remain

Your ever affect bro

H H Hall

Remember us kindly to the Tullocks